

## A SIREN SCHEMER

By Augustus Goodrich Sherwin  
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Plain, honest John Eagerly drove the plow steadily and cheerily. It was not much of a farm plot his parents had left him, but it brought him a living.

More than once he had been tempted to sell out and invest in some small business in the brisk, promising city. He had become cured of that, however, during the last month. Several venturesome young fellows like himself had tried metropolitan ambition and had returned home seedy, disconsolate and sick of an experience that had turned out hollow and unfriendly.

Then, too, just that bright, lovely morning John had made up his mind to something. He had been keeping company with Vera Brooke for some time back. Vera was modest and humble as himself, but he believed she liked him.

"I'll settle down," ruminated John contentedly. "Yes, that's the best way."

It looked so to him. Vera would make an ideal wife. Her folks were poor, she would appreciate a good home. Small as the little homestead was, it was comfortable and fairly furnished. Love would beautify it. They would work together and save, and some day they might own a better place in the town, like Judge Grinnell and his haughty empress of a daughter, Ivy.

"I'll ask Vera this very evening," resolved John, and was happy in the thought.

"Whoa!"

John, just finishing a furrow, looked up to discover a buggy halted just beyond the fence. In it sat the very object of his recent thoughts—the judge and his daughter. The former leaped from the vehicle as if John was his greatest friend in the world. Miss Grinnell smiled at him

—a thing she had never done before. "Hello!" muttered John, "what's up?"

The judge hurried through the fence rails. He looked excited, the bearer of great news. He grasped John's hand and shook it feverishly.

"John," he said, "I'm going to startle you."

"About what?" inquired the young farmer.



Overheard the Judge and His Daughter  
Conversing.

"You had an uncle, Josiah Whitby, in the city?"

"My mother's brother, yes," nodded John.

"He's dead and he has left you a fortune of twenty thousand dollars in money, or as good as money."

"Why," observed John, quite calmly and thoughtfully, "what about his son, Randall?"

"Dead two years ago."